



STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF ECOLOGY

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October 4, 2005

Site Update, BNSF Railway Company Cleanup in Skykomish, WA

Dear community member,

It has been six months since our last letter to you, and we are moving toward cleanup. This letter provides an update on current activities and a schedule for upcoming work.

Skykomish Vision Project

The town of Skykomish engaged in a vision project this spring and summer. 30 people from Skykomish gave their ideas about what they wanted the town to look like after cleanup is complete. In August, facilitators from Berryman & Henigar and the University of Washington's Northwest Center for Livable Communities presented the town with a colorful and detailed portrayal of the vision for the town. Ideas from the visioning will be used by Ecology and BNSF as a guide when writing the cleanup plans. We'll be looking for ways to help the town achieve their vision during restoration after cleanup. You can request a copy of the vision document from Town Hall and see it in the information repositories for the site.

Finalization of BNSF's Draft Feasibility Study

Ecology now considers the Feasibility Study final. It includes enough information to begin making cleanup decisions. At the same time, in addition to using the Study, we continue to gather information to better define the details of a cleanup approach.

In the Feasibility Study, BNSF detailed their preferred alternative for cleanup. Ecology may incorporate some of these plans, especially the levee plans. In addition, Ecology is developing more complete cleanup options for all areas of the site. Ecology and BNSF agree on a number of cleanup details, but discussions will need to continue to reach agreement for the final plan.

In response to Ecology's determination that the Feasibility Study is final, BNSF has submitted an outline for the draft cleanup action plan. Ecology is currently reviewing the outline to ensure that it will provide a thorough cleanup. Once the outline is approved, the draft cleanup action plan will be developed within 90 days. Ecology will describe to the community what it considers to be a good cleanup within the next few months.

Status of the levee cleanup design

BNSF is working hard on the design for cleanup of the levee and the river sediments. A 60% design will be available in October. Once Ecology reviews the design, we will hold a workshop to let people know about the design and give people an opportunity to provide informal comments. The design will be completed this winter and spring.

Some issues of interest to the community are placement of a temporary road into West River Drive for use during cleanup and whether to clean up areas adjacent to the levee at the same time.

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Skykomish cleanup as a community-based cleanup

Ecology intends to make sure that this cleanup is a community-based cleanup. Ecology, as an agency, strives to give people an opportunity to comment on all the actions it decides are necessary to meet the requirements of its various laws. A community-based cleanup goes further and actively looks for ways to give people more opportunities to participate and more choices.

We're excited about this community-based approach, because people are asked about their preferences on plans and designs while they are being developed. Individuals and the community organizations can also provide opinions through technical workgroups, such as the levee design workgroup, and formal comments on comprehensive plans during the public comment period. During cleanup, an individual plan for each property is developed with that property owner.

Unique elements in the Supplemental Public Participation Plan

A unique element in this plan is the process for the town and school, as communal institutions, to get their voice into the development of cleanup plans. These organizations, which may have diverse individual opinions within them, can have a more substantial say in plans at any time with decisions of the town council and school board going on record as public comment. You can find this process described in the supplemental public participation plan of August 2005, pages 6 through 8 in part 2. Public Participation Tools.

River, levee and school sampling

BNSF's technical consultant, Retec Group, Inc., has just completed sampling soil in the levee, river bottom and school yard. Sampling results will be available this fall.

Retec will also sample around the Former Maloney Creek area to continue investigations of dioxin that was found behind the fire station and bus barn earlier this year.

Schedule

We are working with an aggressive schedule to complete the cleanup plans for public comment in late winter or early spring of 2006 and to begin cleanup of the levee in summer 2006. We will let you know immediately if unexpected events cause any changes. We do understand that you need to make plans for your lives, and we apologize in advance for the inconveniences of the cleanup. We will take all measures possible to make plans that least impact your daily lives.

Thank you for your continued patience and participation during this cleanup process. If you have any questions about the cleanup, you can reach me at (425) 649-7209 or Susan Lee at (425) 649-4486.

Sincerely,



Louise Bardy
Site Manager